the ACTION reporter

ACTION, Inc. is the national, private organization for the creation and maintenance of a good environment in our nation's cities

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Good Housing Sought Through Innovation

ACTION on January 27th will conduct a Point-of-Decision Conference on "Innovations to Achieve Good Housing in Good Neighborhoods" in a city that has developed a bold and experimental housing approach.

Pittsburgh, Pa., will be site of the conference and will provide not only the background but the theme for the meeting which is one of four on ACTION's major aims for all American cities:

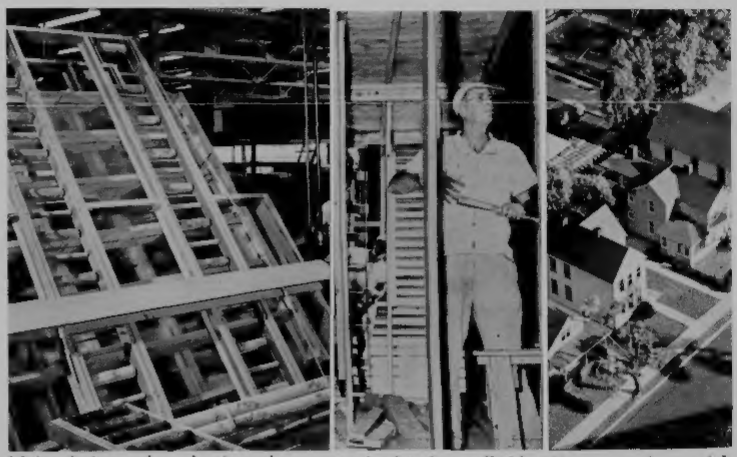
▲ *Good housing in good neighborhoods.*

▲ *Efficient urban transportation, varied as required for the movement of people and goods.*

▲ *Vigorous centers of commerce and culture.* **(See November-December, 1959, ACTION Reporter for a report on this meeting.)**

▲ *Adequate financing for private and public improvements.*

The day's program will begin with a tour of the city's famed Golden Triangle (where the meeting's headquarters hotel, the Pittsburgh Hilton, is located), the Civic Center and the first neighborhood renewal project in Pittsburgh. Speakers will be Andrew Heiskell, chairman of ACTION's executive committee and publisher of LIFE Magazine, and Charles B. Nutting, president of ACTION-Housing Inc., who will discuss, respectively, the national dimension of the housing problems and opportunity and Pittsburgh's response.



*Major design and production advances are in the air on all sides. New uses of materials and construction methods are being combined with improved studies of environmental needs to produce significant innovations in design of the house, of the site development, and of the production system itself.** **Some of these innovations—new materials, new methods, new designs—will be explored at ACTION's Point-of-Decision Conference on Good Housing in Good Neighborhoods January 27th in Pittsburgh.**

Five national manufacturers of housing components located in Pittsburgh will present challenging innovations in construction, materials and methods at the ACTION Point-of-Decision Conference on January 27th in Pittsburgh.

They are: The Aluminum Company of America, Koppers Co., Inc., Westinghouse Electric Corp., Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, and United States Steel Corp.

Representatives of the companies will describe the new construction systems, materials and services to an audience of civic leaders of urban renewal and community development groups from major cities of the nation and home builders, realtors, appraisers, developers, lenders and public officials.

Many of the innovations to be displayed and discussed will be incorporated in residential planning, site layout and construction of Pittsburgh's East Hills development.

Dual-Purpose Luncheon

Pennsylvania's Governor David L. Lawrence, Mayor Joseph Barr of Pittsburgh, and ACTION chairman Roy W. Johnson, former Director, Advanced Research Projects Agency, will be the principal speakers at a luncheon session which will be the Second Annual meeting of Pittsburgh's ACTION-Housing Inc. Presiding will be J. Stanley Purnell, an ACTION board member and chairman of the board of ACTION-Housing Inc.

The emphasis will be on "Innovations in Housing Design and Production" at an afternoon session over which Thomas R. Reid, ACTION vice chairman, will preside. Mr. Reid is civic and governmental affairs manager of the Ford Motor Company.

Other speakers will be Burnham Kelly, associate professor of city planning at M.I.T. and editor of **"Design and the Production of Houses,"** an ACTION book in its Series in Housing and Community Development, and Bernard E. Loshbough, executive director of ACTION-Housing Inc. Innovations from industry will be described by representatives of five major corporations.

A summing up will come from ACTION president James W. Rouse who will discuss, "A Mission For Every City."

* *Page 348, "Design and the Production of Houses," one in an* ACTION *Series in Housing and Community Development. Copies available at $6.50 to those on* ACTION*'s mailing list. The volume retails for $10.*

G/C Program

Two-Way Information Exchange Program Of ACTION/ Local Groups Now in 3rd Year

Some 1,289 men and women in almost 400 cities throughout the nation have something in common.

They are ACTION Group Correspondents, a designation which describes exactly their functions. They keep in steady correspondence with ACTION, telling what their groups are doing in neighborhood and city renewal programs, and they are on the receiving end of letters and materials from ACTION.

The ACTION Group Correspondent Program, now celebrating its third year of activity, provides for an informal, unofficial liaison between local citizen and civic groups and national ACTION. In two years, the 1,289 local organizations represented have selected one of their members to act as their ACTION Group Correspondent.

ACTION sends the Group Correspondent (G/C) up to 15 copies of the ACTION *Reporter* for his group, as well as additional bonus mailings from time to time. Some of these bonuses have included ACTION reports, articles, booklets and reprints—many of them items which are not generally available. The G/C also receives discounts on all ACTION books in its Series in Housing and Community Development and has priority for publications and information from ACTION. In return, the G/C writes reports of his group's progress, programs and plans. The two-way exchange of information benefits both.

ACTION has found through letters from G/C's that local groups represented in the ACTION program also reap less tangible rewards through their association. Many groups report an increase in recognition and status in their home cities because they are part of a nation-wide effort. Then too, they are kept aware that they are not working in isolation—that groups all over the nation are involved in similar programs.

What are the people like who are working to improve their cities? Typical of the diversity are Dr. John Marshall of Philadelphia and Miss Ethel M. Koehler of Dayton. Dr. Marshall is president of Powelton Neighbors and Miss Koehler is executive secretary of the East Dayton Community Council.

DR. MARSHALL and his wife have five children. Miss Koehler is unmarried. Dr. Marshall is a physician, now teaching in the anatomy department of the University of Pennsylvania's Medical School. He got into citizen activities for better cities through his own need for a good place to live with his wife, three boys and two girls. Miss Koehler, a trained social worker in community organization, became involved with community councils when she was doing graduate field work at Wayne University.

The efforts and accomplishments of Dr. Marshall's Powelton Neighbors are detailed in this issue's *Citizens in Action*. The factors that brought, and keep, Dr. Marshall in neighborhood improvement work are simple.

"What attracted me first to Powelton Village," he says, "was its proximity to the University, its closeness to the center of the city and its large, old houses. Space was important to me and my family. When we came to Philadelphia for this teaching job, we made the decision to 'live in' rather than commute. (I'm allergic to suburbs.) I've always lived in the city—being involved in research as I am I often find myself engrossed in a project and I can't regulate my life to fit a railroad schedule. Once we found the right location in which to live, we joined with a few dozen other couples and individuals who shared our belief that the neighborhood could be saved."

THE NEIGHBORHOOD that Miss Koehler's group is working to save and rehabilitate stretches over 670 acres. It is part of Dayton's first urban renewal area. Eighty of the area's 750 acres will be leveled and rebuilt—the remaining 670 are being rehabilitated.

Within that area there are four sections, each with its own community council. The East Dayton Community Council coordinates the efforts of these area councils and works closely with the city.

Primarily, the Council strives to educate residents to the basic facts of rehabilitation. It tells what financial aids are available for home improvement, it plans to do an extensive two-block rehabilitation program to serve as a visual example, and it sponsors such promotional projects as a "Re-new-Re-do Rally" which was held last spring.

"When the people fully understand," says Miss Koehler, "they cooperate. Take

(Continued on Page Four)

For a short time only, ACTION is offering, as a package, 13 Reports from ACTION at a special low price of $1, plus postage. The offer includes: American Housing Statistics, Housing Court, Fight Blight Fund, Quaker "Self-Help" Rehabilitation Program, 100 Selected References, Volunteer Property Inspection, Sources of Aid, Municipal Housing Codes in the Courts, Area Improvement Sponsored by Large Institutions, Financing Home Repairs and Improvements, Organization of Block Groups, Housing Code Provisions and Citizens Organization for Community Improvement.

Downtown on Trial—ACTION Program for Merchants

ACTION, at the request of the National Retail Merchants Association, arranged an entire morning's session of the NRMA 49th Annual Convention, with the focus on "Downtown On Trial."

The meeting, held January 14th in New York City, was chaired by E. Willard Dennis, director of Sibley, Lindsay & Curr Co., Rochester, and chairman of the NRMA's downtown development committee. Presiding was ACTION executive vice president James E. Lash.

The hundreds of retailers heard talks for the downtown by Perry Anderson, Downtown Denver Improvement Association; Lloyd M. Braff, Center Business District Association of Dallas, and Gerald Moore of the Downtown Council of Minneapolis. These speakers were questioned by Philip Hammer, downtown economics analyst of Atlanta, and ACTION president James W. Rouse, president of Community Research and Development, Baltimore.

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Two ACTION Committees — Research And Education — Meet on 1960 Plans

Two of ACTION's key committees—research and educational program—will be meeting January 26th, on the eve of the ACTION Point-of-Decision Conference in Pittsburgh, to map out activities for 1960.

The educational program committee will make decisions on three important projects: 1) A second National Corporate Executives Seminar for business leaders, 2) an ACTION citation program to recognize individual and group efforts to advance the cause of creating good cities, and 3) a national urban university round table.

Meanwhile, the research committee will consider two possible research projects which it may conduct during the coming year. These possibilities are: 1) A series of demonstrations in selected communities throughout the country of the potentialities in new design and technology for creating a new image for the American city, and 2) an investigation into the effect of the real property tax on urban renewal.

To Review East Hills

On that same day, the research committee will be the guest of ACTION-Housing Inc., in its design review of the architectural plans being developed for the East Hills Project. This project had its origins in the report, "Action to Achieve Potentials for Housing in the Pittsburgh Area," written by ACTION after a study of the Pittsburgh housing problem.

Members of the research committee are: **Ferd Kramer,** president, Draper & Kramer, Chicago, chairman; **Clifford J. Backstrand,** president, Armstrong Cork Company, Lancaster, Pa.; **Carl H. Chatters,** Comptroller of the city of Chicago; **Albert M. Cole,** vice president, Reynolds Aluminum Service Corp. of Virginia; **Thomas P. Coogan,** president, Housing Securities, Inc., New York; **William L. Day,** chairman, First Pennsylvania Banking & Trust Co., Philadelphia; **James Felt,** chairman, New York's City Planning Commission; **Ben Fischer,** International representative, United States Steel Workers of America, AFL-CIO; **Philip L. Graham,** president and publisher, The Washington Post and Times-Herald; **Joseph A. Grazier,** president, American Radiator & Standard Sanitary Corp.; **G. Donald Kennedy,** president, Portland Cement Association, Chicago; **Philip M. Klutznick,** Park Forest Companies, Park Forest, Illinois; **Robert M. Mitchell,** chairman, Department of Land and City Planning, University of Pennsylvania; **Thomas F. Patton,** president, Republic Steel Corporation; **James R. Price,** chairman of the board and chief executive officer, National Homes Corp., Lafayette, Indiana; **J. Stanley Purnell,** assistant to the president, T. Mellon & Sons, Pittsburgh; **Dr. Robert B. Stewart,** vice-president and treasurer, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, and **Dr. Robert C. Weaver,** consultant, Ford Foundation.

Educational Committee

Members of the educational program committee are:

Thomas R. Reid, civic and governmental affairs manager, the Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, chairman; **John F. Austin, Jr.,** president, T. J. Bettes, Houston; **U.S. Senator Joseph S. Clark, Jr.** of Pennsylvania; **L. P. Cookingham,** city manager of Fort Worth; **Miss Chloe Gifford,** president, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Washington, D.C.; **Lester B. Granger,** executive director, National Urban League, New York; **Albert M. Greenfield,** honorary chairman, Bankers Securities Corporation, Philadelphia; **Guy T. O. Hollyday,** chairman of the board, the Title Guarantee Company, Baltimore; **Sherman R. Knapp,** president, Connecticut Light and Power Company, Hartford; **Robert H. Levi,** president, the Hecht Company, Baltimore; **Glen A. Lloyd,** chairman of the board of trustees, University of Chicago; **Stanley Marcus,** president, **Neiman-Marcus,** Dallas; **Mayor deLesseps S. Morrison** of New Orleans; **Thomas W. Moses,** president, Indianapolis Water Company; **Norris Nash,** vice president, Kaiser Industries Corporation, Oakland, Calif.; **Charles F. Palmer,** president, Palmer, Inc., Atlanta, and **Raymond Rebsamen,** chairman, Rebsamen & East, Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas.

Testimony of individual ACTION directors at hearings before the Congressional Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems on the Washington Mass Transportation Survey may be obtained as follows:

Write directly to ACTION, 2 West 46th Street, New York 36, for the testimony of ACTION chairman Roy W. Johnson, and ACTION directors Robert B. Mitchell and Robert H. Levi.

Write directly to ACTION director Walter W. Patchell, vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 6 Penn Center Plaza, for his testimony.

The Golden Triangle

Pittsburgh's famous central business district will serve as site of ACTION's January 27th Point-of-Decision Conference on housing and pre-conference meetings of ACTION committees. The renaissance of this area—the oldest part of the city—began in 1945.

NEED HELP FROM OTHER GROUPS? NEW ACTION PUBLICATION LISTS AIDS

Thirty-two organizations actively concerned with renewing our cities tell how their programs can assist your town's efforts in a unique publication just compiled by ACTION.

"Organizations in Renewal" is available in limited supply and will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. ACTION's Group Correspondents are being sent free copies. A fee of 25¢ per copy will be charged all others to help defray postage and handling costs.

The 32-page booklet is made up of statements on objectives, materials, functions and services by outstanding national groups, on their own letterheads, and contains a topical index to help the reader find information more readily. Among the topics listed: Central business district, Citizen participation, Code enforcement, Financing, Home and neighborhood rehabilitation, and Neighborhood and community planning.

Introducing the booklet, Thomas R. Reid, chairman of ACTION's educational program committee, points out that it is a second edition. The first, containing ten statements, was put out a year ago and the supply was quickly exhausted.

"ACTION's objective," writes Mr. Reid, "is to help make the cities of America good places to live and work. . . . A vital ingredient in the complex and comprehensive process of renewing our cities is cooperation and coordination among public and private organizations, locally and nationally. . . ."

For your copy, write to ACTION, 2 West 46th Street, New York 36, sending 25¢.

Marathon Home and Area Fix-Up Contest in 4th Year

Milwaukee, Wisconsin — A neighborhood group here is conducting what may be the longest-running home and area improvement contest in the country.

Three years of the contest period have elapsed already, with two more to go. Leo H. Hennen, secretary-treasurer of the Community Beautification and Stabilization Committee of the Merrill Park area, explains the contest's duration this way: "We figured there was an awful lot to be done in our neighborhood and that it would take at least five years to get it done."

The area, located outside of the central business district, had been deteriorating into a bleak, blighted neighborhood. A group of neighborhood people got together, formed the aforementioned committee and started the contest as one vehicle for improvement.

Signs of Success

Results (with two more years still to go) tell of a success story in the making. According to Mr. Henner, the committee considers these facts indicative of what the contest will ultimately achieve:

Some 178 houses have been improved, most of them getting new coats of paint, new covering, fixed porches, new gutters. . . . Loans are now much easier to come by. Three years ago, getting a home-improvement loan was a difficult proposition. . . . Property values have risen, with the selling price of houses up some $400. . . . Visitors to Milwaukee are taken on tours through the area by Health Department officials to show what rehabilitation can achieve.

Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, the committee is pleased to note that another group is being formed in an adjacent area. That area, too, will have a contest.

The Merrill park contest is open to all residents of the neighborhood, home owners and renters alike, as well as business establishments and manufacturers located in the community. Twelve categories in the contest range from single homes occupied by owner, through apartment houses, hotels and wholesale business units.

For more information, write to Mr. Henner at 515 No. 30th Street, Milwaukee 8, Wis.

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the inspection of houses by the city. Before the city inspectors come through, we hold meetings with the people whose homes are due for inspection and explain why inspections are necessary. The inspectors are usually there at those meetings. Because we get complete understanding, our inspectors have been able to proceed at a very rapid rate."

Miss Koehler reports that the council has been able to adapt many of the ideas it gets from ACTION, ideas which were sprouted by other citizens committees in other parts of the country.

IF YOUR GROUP WISHES TO participate in the Group Correspondent Program, all you need do is write ACTION for full details at 2 West 46th Street, New York 36. ACTION will be looking for your letter.

Correction

The November-December issue of the ACTION Reporter carried a page one photo of ACTION's executive vice president James E. Lash presenting a Certificate of Participation to one of 32 executives who took part in ACTION's National Corporate Executives Seminar. The recipient shown was Charles Olsson, manager of the district sales office of the Aluminum Company of America, Hartford. He was erroneously identified as Everett S. Crites, urban engineer of the Portland Cement Association.

Management Reported Working for Renewal

Employees in two major companies reporting to ACTION are setting a good example for community service in the urban renewal-city planning field.

According to a Sears, Roebuck and Company official, more than 20 per cent of Sears store managers are actively working in those areas in their own towns and cities.

The Connecticut Light and Power Company, which in March 1958 sponsored an all-day ACTION orientation program for its management personnel, reports steadily increasing involvement of its managers in local programs and planning. "I believe," said Anthony E. Wallace, public information manager, "our company's participation has been greatly accelerated by the management's interest in this subject of urban renewal."

For more information on these programs write to: Harry N. Osgood, director of urban programs, Sears, Roebuck and Company, 925 S. Homan Avenue, Chicago 7, and Anthony Wallace, Connecticut Power and Light, P.O. Box 2010, Hartford 1.

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